

EESC Liaison Group

Promoting civil dialogue
and participatory
democracy



Liaison
Group

European Economic
and Social Committee

ORIGINS

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) represents a wide range of national civil society organisations, from employers' organisations and trade unions to consumer groups and social, educational, development and environmental organisations, just to name a few.

In 2004, the Committee decided to set up a Liaison Group with European civil society organisations and networks in order to better represent and coordinate with the organisations active at EU level, and so play to the full its role as a bridge and major channel of communication between the EU and these European organisations.

Aiming for stronger and more structured cooperation with these organisations and networks, the Liaison Group is designed to forge links and provide a forum for political dialogue.

COMPOSITION

The Liaison Group is composed of two parts – EESC members and European civil society organisations – broken down as follows:

- 16 members of the EESC, including its president, its vice-president in charge of communication, the three group presidents, the six policy section presidents, the presidents of the three observatories, the president of the Consultative Commission on Industrial Change and the president of the European Semester Group;
- a wide range of organisations and networks representing the main sectors of organised civil society at European level.



A FORUM FOR CIVIL DIALOGUE

The Liaison Group provides European civil society organisations with their only institutional bridge to the EU institutions, thereby establishing vertical civil dialogue allowing them to discuss and influence the EU agenda and decision-making processes (in accordance with Article 11(1) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU)).

In addition, the Liaison Group offers these European organisations and networks a forum in which to meet and discuss issues relevant to them, effectively establishing a dialogue among them, contributing to creating synergies between different players on issues of common interest, and thus creating a place for horizontal civil dialogue (Article 11(2) TEU).

In order to fulfil its twin mission of promoting both vertical and horizontal civil dialogue, the Liaison Group meets roughly twice a year in plenary, in addition to holding a number of other meetings of its civil society organisation component throughout the year.

ACTIVITIES

The Liaison Group is actively involved in the Committee's activities, notably in advising the other European institutions. Lately, it has been focusing increasingly on priority themes for the EESC and the EU, especially on cross-cutting issues of common interest.

It contributes every year to the EESC's proposals for the Commission Work Programme, to EESC opinions¹, by providing input and experts, and to EESC studies² and hearings on topics regarding civil society organisations.

¹ For example, *Financing of civil society organisations by the EU* and the *Impact of the social dimension & the European Pillar of Social Rights on the future of the EU*.

² Including, among others, on *The future evolution of civil society in the European Union*, *Improving the social media outreach of civil society organisations and the EESC: EU consultation in a digital age*, *Societies outside Metropolises: the role of civil society organisations in facing populism and Youngsters and the EU: Perceptions, Knowledge and Expectations*.

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The Civil Society Days

The annual Civil Society Days are the major Liaison Group initiative, organised jointly with the EESC. They bring together key players in European and national civil society organisations, entrepreneurs, academics, EU policy-makers and the media, and provide a forum for dialogue on issues that are of concern to civil society stakeholders at European level, dealing with subjects of great political and societal relevance.

The Civil Society Days 2020, which were set to focus on a **Sustainable future for European citizens** and were intended as a follow-up to the 2019 edition on Sustainable Democracy in Europe, had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For the same reason, the 2021 edition is being planned as a virtual one focussing on Building a sustainable future for Europe's recovery.

Previous Civil Society Days have dealt with the challenges of the digital world for the European Union and the expectations of European citizens and organisations in relation to economic and social issues, democracy and active European citizenship.

For more information, see: <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/civil-society-citizens-participation/civil-society-days>

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THE CO-CHAIRS



Christa Schweng, EESC president, and **Brikena Xhomaqi**, director of the Lifelong Learning Platform

MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

- **ACE** (Architects' Council of Europe)
- **AEDH** (European Association for the Defence of Human Rights)
- **AGE** Platform Europe (European Older People's Platform)
- **ALDA** (European Association for Local Democracy)
- **CEV** (European Volunteer Centre)
- **COFACE** (Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union)
- **CONCORD** (European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development)
- **COOPERATIVES EUROPE**
- **CPME** (Standing Committee of European Doctors)
- **CULTURE ACTION EUROPE**
- **EDF** (European Disability Forum)
- **EDRi** (European Digital Rights)
- **ECAS** (European Citizen Action Service)
- **EEB** (European Environmental Bureau)
- **EFC** (European Foundation Centre)
- **EFIL** (European Federation for Intercultural Learning)
- **ELEN** (European Language Equality Network)
- **ESU** (European Students' Union)
- **EURAG** (European Federation of Older People)
- **EUROCHILD**
- **EUCIS-LLL** (European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning)
- **EVBB** (European Association of Institutes for Vocational Training)
- **FCE** (European Civic Forum)
- **FEANI** (Federation of professional engineers)
- **FERPA** (European Federation of Retired and Elderly People)
- **FRONT LINE DEFENDERS** (Human Rights)
- **IUT** (International Union of Tenants)
- **RED** (International Association Rurality – Environment – Development)
- **SDG Watch Europe**
- **SEE** (Social Economy Europe)
- **SOCIAL PLATFORM** (Platform of European Social NGOs)
- **SOCIAL SERVICES EUROPE**
- **UEF** (Union of European Federalists)
- **UIPI** (International Union of Property Owners)
- **VOLONTEUROPE**
- **YFJ** (European Youth Forum)



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For more information

For more information, visit the Liaison Group's website:

<http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.liaison-group>

Keep up-to-date with our newsletter published after every plenary session:

<https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/sections-other-bodies/other/liaison-group/newsletters>



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